

Wall & Company Warehouse
N.W. Cor. Wall Street and Exchange Street
Key West
Monroe County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-175

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FLA-175

WALL & COMPANY WAREHOUSE

Location: Northwest corner of Wall Street and Exchange Street,
Key West, Monroe County, Florida.

USGS Key West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.418270.2716270.

Present Owner: City of Key West, Florida, 525 Angela Street, Key
West, Florida.

Present Occupant: City of Key West.

Present Use: Community Center.

Significance: This warehouse was one of the earliest brick
buildings on the island. Wall Street was named for
the Wall & Company's founder, William H. Wall.

PART I HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1879, as shown on plaque on building.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: William H. Wall purchased Lot 3, Square 3, from John W. Simonton in 1847 (Deed Book D, p. 494). In 1881, the building and property were sold by Wall's heirs to Asa F. Tift (Deed Book K, p. 419). In 1901-1902 Tift's heirs sold the entire dock area to the New York and Texas Steamship Co. (Deed Book SS, p. 391, etc.) This company eventually became Agwiline Company, which sold the entire property to Gulf Atlantic Transportation Co. in 1952 (Deed Book G-64, p. 272) and in turn it was purchased from that company by the City of Key West (Deed Book G-64, p. 274).
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: A large, single-story brick building with entrances in all four sides and no windows.
5. Alterations and additions: The building was damaged by the fire of 1886. It appears that the roof was replaced as well as the upper portion of the bricks on the interior wall. Previous to its renovation in 1961-1962 for use as a community center it had been used for storage by a moving van line.

All present partitions were added 1961-1962. Part of the original wooden floors were used in the back and front portions of the main room. All plumbing is modern. The original iron doors remain; however, the fanlights and wooden doors were part of the remodeling, as are the planters, porches, outside and interior light fixtures. Architectural and construction work was done by Rader and Associates Engineers, 1st National Bank Building, Miami, Florida.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

William H. Wall, founder of Wall & Co., was an Englishman who in 1824 came to Key West after being shipwrecked. An astute businessman, he made a fortune dealing in salvaged goods. Wall also pioneered the cigar making business, owned an early printing office, was a stockholder in the local salt company, and speculated in real estate. He was one of the community's earliest and most prominent citizens and the first to make a substantial fortune. He left the island just prior to the Civil War and died in New York in 1866. This building was used as a storehouse for cargos auctioned by order of the federal admiralty.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

Stereo photograph: Bird's-eye view of roof and south side Wall & Co. taken from Tift's observation tower circa 1880. Copy made by J. Franks Brooks from original owned by Earl Johnson, 322 Duval Street, Key West, Florida.

Photographs: circa 1960, Don Pinder, Key West Citizen, 603 Greene Street, Key West, Florida.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Monroe County Courthouse Records and Deedbooks, County Clerk's Office, Key West, Florida.

Monroe Land Title Company Abstract Lot 3, Square 3, Key West, Florida.

Sanborn Map of Key West, 1889, 1926, Sa

b. Secondary and published sources:

American State Papers, Territory of Florida, Vol 5,
Affidavit William H. Wall: Memorial of John W.
Simonton & Associates. 13th Congressional Report
#189, Feb. 9, 1848, pp 30-31.

Browne, Jefferson B. Key West: The Old and New,
The Record Company, St. Augustine, Florida, pp. 12,
113, 120, 164, 174, 175, 183.

Cappick, Marie, "The Key West Story", Coral Tribune, Key
West, Florida, December 28, 1956, p. 5.

Prepared by Betty M. Bruce
Old Island Restoration
Foundation, Inc.
Project Historian
HABS Key West Project
July 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This structure is an excellent example of late nineteenth century commercial architecture, a warehouse for marine salvage. Fanlights above the doors provide the only glazing. Minor modification do not detract from the quality of the structure.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 43'-10" x 153'-8", one story, thirteen bays.
2. Foundations: Masonry to grade.
3. Wall construction: Red ceramic brick, common bond in five stretcher courses, one header course, 1'-9" average thickness; stucco finish from grade to 8'-0".

4. Structural system: Wood trusses 10'-11" over center; all truss members are 6" x 12" actual dimensions, 1" diameter tie rods, 1/2" x 2" strap iron ties, 4' x 6" wood purlins 7"-8" over center, 2" x 6" rafters 2'-0" over center.
 5. Stoops: Brick stoop, steps, cast iron balustrade and planters added circa 1962 to west elevation.
 6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Segmental arched openings one each end and four in each side elevation; three concentric brick header courses and red sandstone keystone; 1/2" x 2" iron plate surround facing at head and jambs; wood frame, six-light fanlight in opening above doorway; two six-panel wood doors per opening; two shutters per opening, constructed of corrugated sheet metal riveted to 1/2" x 2" strap iron frame; cast iron pintles (doors and fans added circa 1962).
 7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, composition membrane over tongue and groove wood sheathing.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Brick cornice in corbeled pattern of 2" projecting courses of vertical, horizontal and diagonal header courses.
 8. Other: White marble insert in recess above east doorway inscribed "Erected AD 1879 Wall & Co."
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plan: Principal entrances from Wall Street on the east and from Mallory Square on the west. Large central space with kitchen and mechanical equipment rooms at east end, entrance vestibule and toilets at west end.
 2. Stairways: Modern folding stair to mezzanine storage space above toilet entrance areas.
 3. Flooring: Modern terrazzo.
 4. Doorways and doors: None of importance

5. Notable hardware: Fragments of metal block locks, keepers, etc.
6. Lighting: None of importance; modern reproductions (bracket lamp of glass, sheet metal with eagle finial) at exterior sides of doorways.
7. Heating, etc.: Modern air conditioning equipment (louvered openings cut into exterior wall for air handling).

D. Site:

The Wall & Company Warehouse is located between Wall Street on the east and Mallory Square on the west. The landscaped area to the south incorporates fragments of an above-grade cistern originally used as a water supply source (roof and drains removed). The edge of the roof runs east-west. The principal entrances are on the east and west.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves AIA
Supervisory Architect
HABS Key West Project
August, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared in 1967 during a summer project jointly sponsored by the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc. of Key West, and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Twenty-two structures were recorded, ranging from commercial structures, residences and hospitals to a convent, a lighthouse, and the Memorial to the Victims of the Disaster of the U.S. Battleship Maine.

The project was under the direction of F. Blair Reeves, AIA, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Florida. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects John D. Davenport and John F. Grimm of Texas A. and M. University, and John O. Crosby of the University of Florida. Mrs. Betty M. Bruce of the Old Island Restoration Foundation, Inc., and Professor Reeves were responsible for the historical and architectural data. They were assisted by members of the Foundation. J. Franks Brooks, Photographer, of Key West, supplied the photographs.